

Egypt is Reborn. Now What?

SPECIAL ISSUE, PAGES 5–13:
EGYPT, TUNISIA, YEMEN, ISRAEL, IRAN



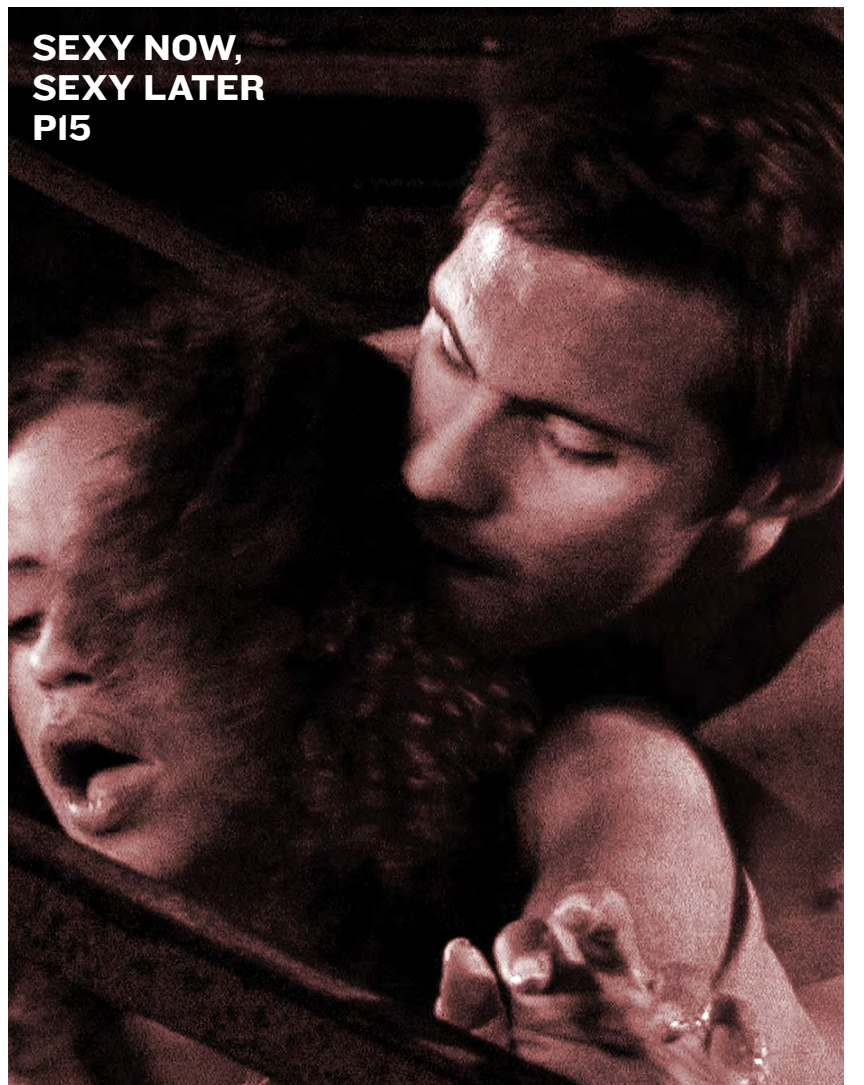
4TH & GOLD
P4



**SECRET BLACK-
JEWISH ALLIANCE**
P13



**SEXY NOW,
SEXY LATER**
P15





THE INDYPENDENT, INC.
666 BROADWAY, SUITE 500
NEW YORK, NY 10012

PHONE: 212-904-1282

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Ellen Davidson, Anna Gold, John Tarleton

GENERAL MANAGER:
Arun Gupta

EDITOR/COORDINATOR:
Elizabeth Henderson

ILLUSTRATIONS COORDINATOR:
Frank Reynoso

DESIGNERS:
Ryan Dunsmuir, Anna Gold, Mikael Tarkela

GENERAL INQUIRIES:
contact@indypendent.org

SUBMISSIONS AND NEWS TIPS:
submissions@indypendent.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS:
indypendent.org/donate

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION:
ads@indypendent.org

READER COMMENTS:
letters@indypendent.org

VOLUNTEER:
volunteer@indypendent.org

INDYKIDS:
info@indykids.org

The Indypendent is a New York-based free newspaper published 16 times a year on Wednesdays for our print and online readership of more than 200,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 650 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Indypendent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Indypendent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

The Indypendent is affiliated with the New York City Independent Media Center, which is part of the global Indymedia movement, an international network that is dedicated to fostering grassroots media production, and with *IndyKids*, a children's newspaper. NYC IMC is an open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org.)

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS:

Sam Alcott, Steven Arnerich, Bennett Baumer, Ellen Davidson, Erika Eichelberger, Renée Feltz, Seth Fisher, Sophie Forbes, Leo Garcia, Christine Hale, Mary Annaïse Heglar, Irina Ivanova, Dondi J, Alex Kane, Julie Laquer, Gary Martin, John McDonald, Michael Nelson, Mike Newton, Mike Niemiec, Jaisal Noor, Sophie Ragsdale, Ann Schneider, Andrew Stern, Gabriella Szpunt, John Tarleton, Donya Todd, Lucy Valkyrie, Steven Wishnia and Amy Wolf.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER, AND FOLLOW OUR BLOGGERS EVERY DAY AT INDYPENDENT.ORG!

community calendar

PLEASE SEND EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS TO INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

WED FEB 16-MAY 19

Various times • Free
EXHIBIT: TRIANGLE SHIRT-WAIST FIRE. Curated by New York University's Tamiment Library, this exhibition draws on historical photographs, archives, artifacts and film clips to tell the story of the fire and its contemporary lessons. NYU Open House, 528 LaGuardia Pl rememberthetrianglefire.org

FEB 17-20

Various times • Free
CONFERENCE: JAMES BALDWIN'S GLOBAL IMAGINATION. This multi-venue, multi-disciplinary conference revisits the work and perspective of James Baldwin while placing his work in a contemporary context. Sponsored by New York University. Seating is limited and registration is required. baldwinconference@gmail.com csqsnnyu.org

SAT FEB 19

7-9:30pm • \$3-\$12
SCREENING: *JUSTICE ON TRIAL: THE CASE OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL*. This screening will feature commentary from the filmmaker and Iranian journalist Kouroos Esmaeli of Big Noise Films Collective and Francisco Torres, a member of the San Francisco 8 and a former Black Panther. Discussion and dinner to follow. Freedom Hall, 113 W 128th St 212-222-0633 • socialism.com

TUE FEB 22

7:30pm • \$6/\$10/\$15
BOOK PARTY: *THE DEVIL'S MILK: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF RUBBER*. Join author John Tully for a discussion of his new book, which tells the story of humanity's long encounter with rubber in a kaleidoscopic narrative that regards little as outside its range without losing sight of the commodity in question. Co-sponsored by *Monthly Review* and *The Indypendent*. Brecht Forum, 451 West St 212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

THU FEB 24

6-8pm • Free
TALK: THE JOBS CRISIS AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY. Bill Fletcher, co-author of *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path toward Social Justice*, will discuss the devastating impact of the economic crisis on African-Americans and the role labor can play in breaking with the bipartisan politics of austerity. Sponsored by the Left Labor Project. 1199 SEIU MLK Labor Center, 310 W 43rd St

FRI FEB 25

4-6:30pm • \$6-\$10
SCREENING: *THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA: DANIEL ELLSBURG AND THE PENTAGON PAPERS*. This documentary, which was nominated for a 2009 Academy Award, has become freshly relevant amid the ongoing Julian Assange/WikiLeaks saga and renewed debates about government secrecy and the conflict between "national security" and the public's right to know. A discussion with director Rick Goldsmith to follow. MoMA, 11 W 53rd St 212-708-9400 • moma.org

SAT FEB 25

7-9pm • Free
EXHIBIT: GEOMETRIC DAYS. Join Exit Art for the opening night of this exhibit, which features new paintings by eight artists whose deployment of geometry exposes organizational structures from microscopic, political and spiritual dimensions. The show will run through April 30. Exit Art, 475 Tenth Ave 212-966-7745 • exitart.org

SUN FEB 27

7am • Donation suggested
ACTION: GET ON THE BUS FOR THE COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS. Join the CIW and their allies in Boston as they march on Stop & Shop and support the fight for dignified wages and respect for farmworkers. To reserve a spot on the bus to Boston and for more information about the departure location, email CFAoutreach@gmail.com. 239-657-8311 • ciw-online.org

FEB—MAR

THU FEB 24 • 7:30 PM
CLASS: READING *CAPITAL, VOL. 1*
This class will introduce participants to Vol. 1 of Marx's *Capital* in a seminar and discussion format. Participants will read selections of *Capital* focusing on Commodities, Money, Simple Reproduction (the accumulation of capital), and Primitive Accumulation. This 12-session seminar will be taught by Martin Davis. Sliding scale: \$95-\$125

THU MARCH 3 • 7:30 PM
BOOK PARTY/FORUM: *CAPITALISM, FOR AND AGAINST: A FEMINIST DEBATE*
In a discussion covering a broad range of social and economic issues, including unequal pay, industrial reforms and sweatshops, authors Nancy Holstrom and Ann Cudd examine how these and other issues relate to women. Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

TUE MARCH 15 • 7:30 PM
DISCUSSION: GLOBAL CAPITALISM, A MONTHLY UPDATE WITH RICK WOLFF. Join Professor Wolff for an analysis of the major economic events of the last month and their contexts within the longer-term economic trends shaping politics and society in the United States and abroad. Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

FOR INFORMATION AND TICKET RESERVATIONS
brechtforum.org
or 212-242-4201

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE BRECHT FORUM

BUILDING A MOVEMENT THAT MOVES

451 West Street (btw Bank and Bethune)

SAT MARCH 5

8PM • \$5
PARTY: END APARTHEID! Part of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), come enjoy DJ sets, guest performances and great company. IAW is part of an effort to educate people about the nature of Israel as an apartheid system and to build Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns. Sponsored by Siege Busters and Existence is Resistance. All proceeds benefit IAW. LGBT Community Center, 208 W 13th St siegebusters@gmail.com apartheidweek.org

MARCH 18-20

Various times • \$20-\$60
EVENT: LEFT FORUM 2011: TOWARDS A POLITICS OF SOLIDARITY. The Left Forum—the largest annual conference of left and progressive intellectuals, activists, academics, and the interested public in the U.S.—will convene this March in New York City. The Left Forum will bring together 700 speakers, over 3,000 participants and 200 panels, during the three-day conference. Plenary speakers include Cornel West, Barbara Ehrenreich, Laura Flanders and Paul Mason. Pace University, One Pace Plaza 212-817-2003 • leftforum.org

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

BELOW 14TH ST.

WBAI - 99.5FM
120 Wall St., 10th floor
Bluestockings
172 Allen St.
Housing Works
126 Crosby St.
Hudson Park Branch Library
66 Leroy St.
Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer St.
Whole Earth Bakery
130 St. Marks Place
Brecht Forum
451 West St.
4th Street Food Co-op
58 E. 4th St
Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.
DC 37 Headquarters
125 Barclay St.

14TH TO 96TH ST.

New York Public Library
Epiphany Branch
228 E. 23rd St.
Chelsea Square Restaurant
23rd St. & 9th Ave
Manhattan Neighborhood Network
537 W. 59th St.
New York Public Library
Muhlenberg Branch
209 W. 23rd St.
St. Agnes Branch Library
444 Amsterdam Ave (btwn 81st and 82nd)
ABOVE 96TH ST.
New York Public Library
George Bruce Branch
518 W. 125th St.
Book Culture
526 W. 112th St.

New York Public Library
Harlem Branch
9 W. 124th St.
New York Public Library
Hamilton Grange Branch
503 W. 145th St.
Uptown Sister's Books
156 St. & Amsterdam
Bloomingdale Branch Library
150 W. 100th St.
BROOKLYN
Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy.
BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.
Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.
Tea Lounge
Union St. & Seventh Ave.
Video Gallery
310 Seventh Ave.

Ozzie's Coffee Shop
249 5th Ave. & 57 Seventh Ave.
Verb Café
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.
Pillow Café
505 Myrtle Ave.
Sisters Community Hardware
900 Fulton St.
Brooklyn Public Library
Pacific Street Branch
25 Fourth Ave.
K-Dog & Dune Buggy
43 Lincoln Rd.
Outpost Café
1014 Fulton St.
Blackbird Café
197 Bedford Ave.
'sNice Café
315 Fifth Ave.
Purity Diner
43 Underhill Ave.

Brooklyn Public Library
Bedford Branch
496 Franklin St.

BRONX
Brook Park
141st St. & Brook Ave.

Mi Casa Cafe
18 Bedford Park Blvd E.

New York Public Library
High Bridge Branch
78 W. 168th St.

New York Public Library
Mott Haven Library
321 E. 140th St.

STATEN ISLAND
St. George Library
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond Branch Library
75 Bennett St.

Dot Com Cafe
36 Bay St.

Everything Goes Book Café
208 Bay St.

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE
Phone: 212-904-1282
E-mail: contact@indypendent.org
For a complete distribution list:
indypendent.org

Flaum in a Pickle: Fired Workers Raise a Ruckus for Union Rights and Back Pay

BY DIANE KRAUTHAMER AND MARTY KIRCHNER

Hidden in the industrial corridor that stretches through East Williamsburg, Bushwick, Ridgewood, and Maspeth is an area of urban manufacturing warehouses that form a “sweatshop belt.” This belt of warehouses, many of which provide food processing and delivery services to specialty stores and restaurants throughout New York City, relies on the exploitation of a largely immigrant workforce. Workers suffer under harsh conditions with little to no voice on the job, but at one of these warehouses — Flaum Appetizing Co. in East Williamsburg — the workers are fighting back.

Maria Corona and her friend, Ana — who asked that her real name not be used

for fear of employer retaliation — used to work together in the salad prep area of Flaum, preparing as many as eight vats of coleslaw, potato salad, cucumber salad and fruit salad per day. Maria and Ana worked upwards of 80 hours per week for less than the minimum wage with no overtime pay.

Three brothers, Felipe, Justino and Placido Romero, worked with their nephew Juan in preparing, packing and delivering hummus, salads, pickles and other kosher products that carry the Flaum name. They typically worked 12-hour days, six days a week, which they said was not easy, but it was tolerable.

“In the beginning it wasn’t good, but it wasn’t bad,” said Juan, but in 2007 a new manager came in and the conditions worsened drastically.

“The manager would call us ‘tarantulas’

and ‘cockroaches,’” said Maria. “He would point to the pickle barrels and say ‘that’s how you guys sneak into the country.’ Then we would ask him why he would say that and he said ‘I don’t like Latinos.’”

Fed up with long hours, low pay, discrimination and abuse, the workers at Flaum agreed that enough was enough. They met with an organizer from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) labor union and decided to join in order to fight for improved conditions and a decent standard of living. What followed was a campaign of harassment and intimidation by management that culminated in the firing of 17 workers in May 2008.

With the help of the IWW, the workers filed an Unfair Labor Practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB ruled that this firing was illegal retaliation and fined the company \$260,000

in back pay. Flaum owner Moshe Grunhut has yet to pay the workers, claiming that they aren’t entitled to it because of allegations regarding their immigration status.

In 2010, the workers connected with Brandworkers International, a workers’ advocacy organization, and reenergized their fight. The former Flaum workers regularly organize grassroots protests, discussions, social events and meetings with a coalition called Focus on the Food Chain — a joint project of the IWW and Brandworkers International.

At least once a week the fired workers and their supporters hold grassroots protests outside such grocery stores as KRM Kollel in Borough Park to educate customers about workers’ rights abuses at Flaum.

The campaign is having an impact, with the Park Slope Food Coop voting to boycott Sonny & Joe’s hummus — a popular Flaum product — in December. Barzini’s on the Upper West Side decided to stop selling Flaum products in January 2011 and Associated Supermarket and Zabar’s, followed suit in February, along with Third Ave Garden on the Upper East Side.

The Flaum workers have received support from such area Jewish groups as Uri L’Tzedek, an Orthodox social justice organization, as well as the Jewish Social Action Club at Queens College. With increased pressure and media exposure, members of the founding family Beverly and Sander Flaum put out a statement that officially distanced themselves from the current ownership.

“Since 1987 no family member of the original Flaum’s Appetizing Store ownership has had any financial or any other interest in any Flaum Appetizing business enterprise,” they wrote in a Jan. 11 letter to *The Jewish Weekly*. When the business was sold, the Flaums wrote, its present owners “took over all managerial and financial responsibility for the enterprise.”

“We will win if we’re united,” said Placido Romero, reflecting on the campaign’s growing power. Although he, his family, Maria and Ana continue to await the pay they are owed, they say they are going to keep fighting until they get what they are owed and conditions improve for all the workers at Flaum. And they say a breakthrough at Flaum will also set the stage for future organizing efforts in the sweatshop belt.

“It doesn’t matter if it takes weeks, months or years. We’re going to keep engaging in battle,” said Felipe Romero.

For more, see brandworkers.org.



FIGHT FOR RIGHTS: Former workers at Flaum Appetizing Co. and their supporters march in East Williamsburg last summer. Seventeen workers were fired in 2008 for trying to unionize. The National Labor Relations Board has since fined the company \$260,000 and ordered the workers reinstated.

Little Egypt

Talaat Abdel, a physician from Long Island, was in Astoria, Queens on Feb. 11 when Mubarak stepped down. “My generation was afraid to protest since we were concerned about our children and going to jail, but my generation stood aside and the younger generation was determined and persisted. They never lowered the ceiling of what they wanted,” Abdel said.

CREDIT: SOPHIE FORBES



THANKS TO YOU!

Thanks to the generous support of hundreds of readers, *The Independent* met its fund drive goal of \$20,000 and will be able to continue publishing in 2011.

“The outpouring of contributions means we can keep improving our award-winning reporting and analysis, which helps readers to better understand their world” said Arun Gupta, the paper’s general manager. Founded in 2000, *The Independent* is published 16 times a year with a print and online readership of more than 200,000.

Law and Disorder radio

WBAI
99.5 FM

**Mondays
at 9am**

**DOWNLOAD PODCASTS
at lawanddisorder.org**

“Our basic constitutional rights are in jeopardy. “Law and Disorder” is an excellent magazine format radio show, hosted by progressive lawyers, than analyze the state of civil rights in this post-9/11 period. From attacks on Muslims at home to torture abroad, “Law and Disorder” puts these constitutional attacks into perspective.”

—AMY GOODMAN,
HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights; Michael Smith, New York City attorney and author



bluestockings

radical bookstore | activist center
fair trade cafe
172 ALLEN ST • 212-777-6028
bluestockings.com

FRI, FEB 25, 7PM • \$5 SUGG

DISCUSSION: COCO RIOT: ZINESTERS QUEER THE SPANGLISH LANGUAGE! Join the book's contributors as they discuss queerness, zines, migration and building space for identity as Spanish speakers in English-dominated subcultural spaces.

SUN, FEB 27, 7PM • \$5 SUGG

SCREENING: DAVID ZLUTNICK'S OCCUPATION HAS NO FUTURE: MILITARISM & RESISTANCE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE This new documentary explores Israeli militarism, the occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and the work of Israelis and Palestinians organizing against occupation.

THU, MARCH 3, 7PM • FREE

READING: SHARON J. SMITH'S THE YOUNG ACTIVIST'S GUIDE TO BUILDING A GREEN MOVEMENT AND CHANGING THE WORLD Smith will discuss proven strategies and lessons learned from the winners of Earth Island Institute's Brower Youth Awards--America's top honor for young green leaders.

NFL Owners Prepare to Sack Union



UNION LABEL: Superbowl MVP quarterback Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers also serves as his team's union representative.

BY JOHN TARLETON

The Green Bay Packers upset victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers in this year's Super Bowl drew 111 million viewers, the most in U.S. television history. It may also be the last look fans get at pro football for a long time.

The collective bargaining agreement between players and owners expires March 3 and the owners have been preparing to lock out the players for up to several years in order to achieve hard-ball demands that would make your average robber baron blush: a billion dollars a year in player givebacks and expanding the regular-season schedule from 16 to 18 games despite growing awareness of the alarming injury rates suffered by football players. The owners claim player salaries are putting the league in financial peril but have refused to open their books.

“We’re watching the most powerful men in America tell workers to work longer for less pay,” said sports columnist Dave Zirin. “This is huge for everyone.”

The NFL has never been more popular and its revenues have continued to surge during the Great Recession. According to *Forbes*, it is a \$9 billion annual industry

and individual teams are worth an average of slightly more than \$1 billion. The median player salary is \$770,000 but the average length of an NFL player's career is only 3.4 years. Former players who suffer from crippling injuries (including sky-high rates of dementia) are frequently sacked by post-retirement healthcare costs.

Players who wash out of the NFL before their fourth season receive no post-retirement health insurance coverage from the league. Those who do endure long enough to become vested in the league's health insurance program only receive coverage for the first five years after they stop playing despite often being saddled with conditions that make it difficult to obtain other healthcare coverage.

The players may be the game. But if this labor conflict was the Super Bowl of collective bargaining, they would be two-touch-down underdogs. The owners negotiated their network television contracts so that they will still rake in \$4 billion next season even if a single game is not played. The NFL also has cultivated political support inside the beltway where it has spent nearly \$5.5 million on congressional lobbying since

2006, according to *The Washington Post*, and recently shoveled \$680,000 in donations to key allies on Capitol Hill through a political action committee.

For the players, a prolonged lockout means losing earnings from what is already a short career. Current players and their families also face losing their healthcare coverage once a lockout begins. Similar dynamics worked against the players in the NFL's last labor stoppage in 1987 when star players such as Joe Montana, Steve Largent and Randy White crossed their teammates picket lines to play with little-known scabs. That strike collapsed in less than four weeks.

For the players, winning public support will be key. The NFL Players Association (NFLPA) is a member of the AFL-CIO and has received vocal support from labor leaders who note that a strike would also affect 25,000 people who work at stadiums during the season. In November, it announced its local chapters will fully affiliate with all AFL-CIO state federations and the central labor councils.

“The circumstances may be different, but the need for workers to stick together is the same everywhere, whether it's at NASA, at Delta Air Lines or the NFL,” said Thomas Buffenbarger, President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW). NFL players in turn have appeared at events in support of IAMAW workers facing layoffs in Florida and Louisiana.

Players will also be using social media to communicate directly with their fans. On Jan. 18 the possible NFL lockout became a trending topic on Twitter when players from across the league sent tweets (#LETUSPLAY) and Facebook messages to their fans.

Striking workers (or locked-out workers, as the case may be) are often skewered in the media as lazy and undeserving. However, the combination of the owners' sheer greed and public sympathy for athletes who sacrifice their bodies on national television every Sunday for five months may yet swing public support behind the players and force the NFL to back down.

Or so says *New York Post* sports columnist Mike Vaccaro.

“As fans remove the fingers from their ears and the blindfolds from their eyes and start to accept the fact that America's favorite game is inching ever closer to Armageddon, this is what you're starting to see, and hear, and feel, more and more,” Vaccaro recently wrote, “Good for the players. And to hell with the owners.”

Count On It



On Feb. 9 Picture the Homeless (PTH), a homeless advocacy organization, and Hunter College's Center for Community Planning and Development announced the launch of the first-ever count of vacant buildings and lots throughout the five boroughs. Genghis Khalid Muhammad (left) and William Burnett (center) of PTH, and Gerald DeYoung (right) of VOCAL – NY were present for the announcement. CREDIT: PICTURE THE HOMELESS

A PEOPLE'S TEAM

The NFL is a big business and the league's owners know how to cash in: A favorite play is threatening to move a franchise to another city in order to shake down taxpayers for an expensive new stadium.

Then there's the Green Bay Packers. The four-time Super Bowl champs play their home games in a city of 101,000 people where they were founded in 1919 and won't be leaving for greener pastures. The team is a nonprofit corporation owned by its fans.

About 112,000 stockholders control 4.75 million shares in the team and no stockholder can own more than 200,000 shares. The team is governed by a seven-member executive committee, elected from a 45-member board of directors. If the team were ever to be dissolved its funds would be donated to local charities through the Green Bay Packers Foundation.

— J.T.

Revolutions in the Information Age

BY STUART SCHAAR

Rabat, Morocco — Facebook and cell phone text messages helped Tunisia's youth organize an unprecedented revolution, which led to the overthrow of the 23-year-long Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali dictatorship and his flight with members of his family to Saudi Arabia on Jan. 14.

Arab satellite news stations, led by Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, allowed the people of Tunisia to bypass Western media and get vivid commentary in their own language as the revolution gathered force. Gen. Rachid Ammar, who heads the country's small professional army of 35,000, saved the day by proclaiming that his troops would not fire on the crowds and by advising Ben Ali to leave the country at the peak of the revolt. He is now a national hero and a possible future arbiter of power.

The success of street demonstrations in forcing the old guard Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi to reshuffle his recently appointed cabinet and eliminate key ministers from the old regime is a major victory for the revolutionaries. So too is the decision by the new minister of the Interior to suspend the activities of the former ruling party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally, whose members have been accused of violence and looting in the weeks following Ben Ali's flight.

The deposed Ben Ali family used to shake down businesses for 25 percent of their worth.

Protesters are demanding a clean sweep from the past, new elections and a social order built on human rights, a free judiciary, an open press and real TV debates. They also want an end to widespread corruption, which milked the country of billions of dinars, impoverished at least 30 percent of the population and left many young people jobless.

When the Islamist leader Rachid Ghannouchi (no relation to the prime minister) returned to Tunisia on Jan. 30 after 22 years of forced exile, thousands of his followers met him at Tunis' airport. Knowledgeable commentators estimate his movement, al-Nahda, may win 20 to 30 percent of the vote in projected parliamentary elections, but no one really knows the strength of the Islamists. In the last electoral test they participated in 22 years ago, they polled 17 percent of the vote. Many of the secular youth who fomented the revolution, including emancipated women and trade union rank and file, will contest Islamist dominance and help mobilize secular forces unleashed by the revolution. The question remains whether the military will allow an Islamist sweep of elections six months hence.

What took place in Tunisia is only the first step of a mass movement for change within the wider Arab world and beyond, where dictators rule. We live in an era that has provided young people everywhere with new means to organize and control their own media through digital technology shared on social media outlets.

In the late 1990s, sociologist Manuel Castells published a three-volume work entitled *The Information Age*. He argued it will be

as transformative as the Industrial Revolution that began in Great Britain in the late 18th century. The Information Age has democratized access to information and empowered the powerless. Masses of people now possess new technology that even the most adroit censors cannot entirely control.

I have lived in Tunisia on and off since 1960. In 2006 I moved there to write a book about Tunisian leaders under French colonial rule in the 1920s. On many occasions I found my AOL account blocked because Islamic radicals in the country used the site and the government decided to cut off access for everyone. I learned how to bypass the block by learning a few words of Japanese and accessing an Asian site to read my email. Over the years, I have exchanged information with young Tunisians who have become masters at circumventing censorship.

Everyone in the country knew about the kleptocratic families of the president and his wife, Leila Trabelsi. During one of my stints in Tunisia, rumors spread that the Trabelsis were shaking down successful businesses for 25 percent of their worth. Last year I heard stories about "the family" taking over 50 percent of a factory and confiscating rural land. Few successful businesses were safe. They had set up a mafia-like enterprise that gave out import and export licenses to those who cooperated and denied licenses to those who refused.

In addition, if the police picked people up who had no protectors of importance they frequently ended up in the notorious Bouchoucha prison in Tunis. It often took a family several days to find out that their relatives had been arrested. They had to bribe Bouchoucha guards to find out if a son or brother was imprisoned there. Prisoners expected to be beaten and maltreated. Political prisoners, especially Islamists, faced brutal torture.

In rural small towns such as Sidi Bouzid and Kasserine, where the revolution began, people felt that the world had passed them by, leaving them without jobs of any value and scarcely any development. On Dec. 17, 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi, a high school dropout, immolated himself because a policewoman had confiscated the fruits and vegetables he was selling on the street. Immediately, his hometown, Sidi Bouzid, erupted. When he died on Jan. 4, Bouazizi became a martyr and the hero of the uprising. Kasserine blew up next and the revolt spread. For the first time the interior provinces, instead of Tunis or the coastal zone, fomented a mass protest movement. Tunisians, long cowed by Ben Ali's security forces, found the courage to confront the 100,000 or so brutal police throughout the country of 10.5 million people.

Under Ben Ali, police control affected most Tunisians. Anyone organizing a meeting had to have permission from the Ministry of Interior. One could expect a police informant in the audience. If a stranger appeared at a meeting, everyone clammed up. Any person renting lodging had to report to the police and submit a copy of the lease and their identification. Any non-relatives visiting a family for several nights also had to report to the police. Noncompliance could lead to six months in jail.

Continued on page 6



AN ECONOMIC NIGHTMARE

By NADIA MARZOUKI

Since the late 1990s the World Bank, IMF, European countries and the United States have singled out Tunisia as a model of economic reform in North Africa. In 2008, for example, the World Bank called Tunisia a "top regional reformer" in easing access to credit and marveled that the Mediterranean nation has doubled its exports of goods and services over the previous decade. IMF President Dominique Strauss-Kahn stated in November 2008 that the "Tunisian economy is going well" and that Tunisia is "good example for emerging countries." The reality, however, has been much darker.

Following his 1987 coup, which removed "president-for-life" Habib Bourguiba, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali stamped out the few political and civil liberties that Tunisians had attained. He was a master of staging demonstration elections that returned him to power with more than 90 percent of the vote. The ruling party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), won every legislative election in a landslide. Through the party apparatus, the regime carefully tracked the activities of labor unions, student associations, women's rights groups and media outlets, as well as dictating the content of cultural events.

State surveillance operated at three levels: First, political activists were severely repressed. Tunisia was among the most heavily policed states in the world, with about 100,000 policemen in a country of 10.4 million. Torture of political prisoners has been repeatedly documented and denounced by human rights organizations. Second, the RCD established a complex and pervasive regime of monitoring ordinary citizens, described by the French political economist Béatrice Hibou as a "control grid." A Tunisian citizen had to take care not to incur the local RCD watchdog's wrath in order to conduct her ordinary life undisturbed. Officials might otherwise interfere with her enrollment at a university, her exams, her wedding or her desire to open a restaurant or shop, acquire property, give birth in a hospital, obtain a passport or even buy a cell phone. Third, and due to the intrusive state measures, paranoia spread among the populace. After 23 years of internalizing fear, Tunisians became their own censors.

Repression, however, is not the only factor. The longevity of the authoritarian system relied on a combination of coercion and consent, what Hibou, in her book *La force de l'obéissance*, called a "security pact." Under the terms of this tacit deal, in exchange for relatively easy access to credit and consumer goods, the Tunisian people were expected to acquiesce to the lack of civil and political liberties.

Credit and consumption were a large part of the "Tunisian miracle." The regime had compromised the old productive base of the economy by adopting the usual IMF and World Bank recommendations to sell off and downsize public-sector industries and agricultural cooperatives. In its place grew a more contingent economy of textile enterprises and call centers operated by foreign investors, who offered short-term low-paying jobs, and tourist resorts on the country's sun-splashed beaches. Tourism and call centers, where Tunisians record the orders of Western consumers, are two of the main exports in the World Bank's accounting. The promise of credit, which as elsewhere was to have aided Tunisians in starting small businesses, has proven ephemeral, in part due to rampant corruption: Persons with connections in high places took the most lucrative opportunities for themselves.

Under Bourguiba there was a strong and dynamic middle class, highly educated and entrepreneurial. The corruption and bad governance of Ben Ali's reign have contributed to the pauperization of the middle class and the dramatic rise of unemployment. Forty-six percent of youth who have university degrees have no jobs commensurate with their education. The avarice of the president and his wife's relatives gradually alienated Tunisian and foreign investors, who were tired of paying a tithe to the reigning family and preferred relocating to the more transparent Gulf countries. The so-called economic success story of Tunisia became a nightmare for the Tunisian people.

Nadia Marzouki is a Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. This article was excerpted from the Middle East Report and Information Project, merip.org.

DEMOCRACY NOW!

Independent news hour with Amy Goodman and co-host Juan Gonzalez
TV-Radio-Internet
DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG



The corporate media got it wrong on Iraq. Tune in to the show that got it right.

PACIFICA RADIO
99.5 FM WBAI
9am, Mon-Fri

PUBLIC ACCESS TV
CUNY-TV Channel 75 (All Boroughs)
6:30pm Mon-Fri, 1am Mon-Thurs

Manhattan MNN Channel 34/82
8am, Mon-Fri

Brooklyn BCAT Channel 56/69
9am, Mon-Fri

Bronxnet Channel 67
9am, Tues & Thurs

SATELLITE TV
Free Speech TV
DISH Network Channel 9415
8am, Noon, 7pm, Midnight, Mon-Fri

Link TV
DISH Network Channel 9410 / DirecTV Channel 375
11am, 6pm, Mon-Fri

DEMOCRACY NOW! EN ESPAÑOL
www.democracynow.org/es

WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG
Audio, Video and Transcripts

DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

Tehran Looks on Calmly

BY ALI REZA ESHRAGHI

While the United States nervously observes the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and unrest in other Middle Eastern states, the mood among officials in Tehran is one of undisguised satisfaction. For Iran, whatever change emerges has to be better than the status quo.

Following the ouster of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said, "I congratulate the great Egyptian nation and I share joy with them."

Both the Iranian government and the opposition have welcomed the wave of protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria and Jordan. Each believes that it is the inspiration for the grassroots movement.

The regime's propaganda machine has portrayed the popular uprisings as evidence of the influence of its own Islamic revolution. Ironically, the culmination of Egypt's revolution came on the 32nd anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution, Feb. 11, 1979.

Meanwhile, Iranian opposition leader Mir-Hossein Mousavi takes the view that Egypt's uprising is modeled on the Green

Movement demonstrations of 2009.

Mousavi had made it clear he would seek to elevate Iran's influence in the region, and regional leaders are aware that he would have enjoyed greater legitimacy. According to a WikiLeaks cable, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan described Mousavi as more dangerous than President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad because the latter was at least "an open book."

As such, Middle Eastern leaders seem to prefer Ahmadinejad to the alternatives despite their troubled relations with Iran. Ousted Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, for example, was among the first to congratulate Ahmadinejad on his 2009 re-election.

If the prospect of reform and democracy in Iran are viewed with suspicion by Arab leaders, the reverse is not true. The Iranian state may not countenance dissent at home, but it welcomes grassroots democratic change in Arab states.

First, almost any kind of regime change is likely to produce governments that are less hostile to Iran than the current ones. Second, this will offer new avenues for Iran to build influence in those countries.

Tunisia

Continued from page 5

Intellectuals travelling to foreign conferences often had their passports taken away at the airport, forcing them to cancel their trip. If they succeeded in passing police controls, they had to submit the texts of their presentations for censorship, sometimes receiving alternate texts in their place. Most people I knew feared that their homes and automobiles were tapped. To have meaningful conversations with some of my political friends we had to walk along the beach in order to evade police espionage.

Friends in Tunisia say that for two weeks after Ben Ali's departure life gradually returned to normal. Demonstrations were still taking place in front of the prime minister's office in the Kasbah to pressure the new government to organize free elections and guarantee freedoms. Schools have reopened since they were shut down at the beginning of the revolt. The government has also announced that all unemployed graduates with a professional degree will be given 150 dinars a month until they find work.

The center of Tunis has become a forum for political debate. For the first time in decades, people could speak their minds without fear of being snatched by the secret police. Subsidies on key foods have been restored, alleviating some of the misery produced by the precipitous rise in the price of staples.

Starting on Jan. 31, however, armed thugs began appearing on the streets in Tunis, terrorizing the population. My friends suspect they are police officers in plainclothes who are fighting back in the name of the old regime. Al Jazeera has broadcast footage of policemen beating up downtown demonstrators once again. Protesters wondered whether the army would intervene to protect the population under siege.

At no time did water, electricity or garbage collection stop in Tunis. Bus and tram service slowed but continued despite the tumult. Many workers stayed at their posts, and most people have returned to work. Rank-and-file workers of the General Union of Tunisian Workers broke with their gov-



The family of Tunisia's former dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali set up mafia-like schemes to gain control over much of the economy. CREDIT: Wikipedia/Commons

ernment-appointed leaders and joined demonstrators. They lent experience from organizing large-scale May Day demonstrations over the years. There seems to be a struggle for control of the labor movement, but at least the old guard faces a revolt from more democratic forces that have a new liberated society on their side.

No one can predict what will happen next in Tunisia. We know both from history and WikiLeaks that the United States intervenes whenever possible to enhance its national interests. But with the Information Age revolution, a new world exists out there that neither it nor any other power can control.

Stuart Schaar is professor emeritus of Middle East and North African history, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and co-author of The Middle East and Islamic World Reader. He lives and teaches in Rabat, Morocco.

"Early's book critiques a union culture that privileges control over the practice of democracy. With an honest eye, he adds an essential chapter to the long history of rank-and-file efforts to keep unionism vibrant and engaged."

—Vanessa Tait,
author of *Poor Workers' Unions*



THE CIVIL WARS IN U.S. LABOR

Birth of a New Workers' Movement or Death Throes of the Old?

STEVE EARLY

\$17

"...should be required reading for all workers' rights advocates."

—U.S. senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

In this incisive new book, labor journalist Steve Early draws on scores of interviews and on his own union organizing experience to examine the bitter disputes about union structure, membership rights, organizing strategy, and contract standards that enveloped the progressive wing of the union movement. As Kim Moody writes, "It will infuriate some, but inspire many more to build and transform their unions."

New at
Haymarket
Books.org

as Arabs Protest

In an environment in which Middle Eastern governments have enjoyed U.S. backing over many years, Iran has presented itself as champion of the oppressed majority.

Iran has fewer problems with regional states that have a semblance of democracy than with those that do not. Islamists rose to power via elections in Turkey, and relations have never been better. In Iraq, after 50 years of tensions and a bloody eight-year war in the 1980s, Tehran now has friends in high places in the shape of an elected president and prime minister.

In Tunisia, Islamist groups that were suppressed under President Ben Ali are now emerging as political forces, with the once outlawed Ennahdha party under Rachid Ghanouchi preparing for elections.

On the other hand, unelected autocrats tend to be more threatening to Iran. WikiLeaks cables reveal that Saudi King Abdullah and senior officials in countries like Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan urged the United States to attack Iran.

By contrast, opinion surveys show that the average citizen in the Arab states is not hostile to Iran. A poll conducted by the

Washington-based Brookings Institute in 2010 showed that on average just 10 percent of respondents in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates viewed Iran as a threat, compared with 88 percent holding the same view of Israel and 77 percent seeing the United States that way.

Thus, if these people were given greater participation through free elections, they would be unlikely to back policies hostile to Tehran. In addition, democracy in Bahrain could hand power to the Shia majority there, and even in Saudi Arabia the Shia minority located in the east could gain greater autonomy.

The presence of a diversity of political groups in place of monolithic ruling structures would offer Iran more opportunities to make inroads by negotiating and striking deals with various sides.

Contrary to the assertions of Middle Eastern rulers, Iran is realistic enough not to seek to build a new empire or even to create copycat regimes answerable to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Continued on page 12

The View From Israel

BY ILAN PAPPÉ

In Israel's view the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions are bad, very bad. Educated Arabs, not all dressed as "Islamists," quite a few speaking perfect English, whose wish for democracy is articulated without resorting to anti-Western rhetoric, are bad for Israel.

Arab armies that do not shoot at these demonstrators are just as bad. The world reaction is also bad. It makes the Israeli

occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and its Apartheid policies inside the pre-1967 border look like the acts of a typical "Arab" regime.

For a while you could not tell what official Israel thinks. In his first-ever common-sense statement, Prime Minister Netanyahu asked his ministers, generals and politicians not to comment publicly on the events in Egypt. For a brief moment you thought that Israel turned from the neighborhood thug to what it always was: a visitor or permanent resident.

But Netanyahu could not keep his mouth shut for long. Perhaps he was embarrassed by his new chief of Military Intelligence. On Jan. 25, the same day protests began in Egypt, Gen. Aviv Kochavi told the Knesset that the Mubarak regime was as solid and resilient as ever. Netanyahu predicted Egypt could "go the way of Iran ... where calls for progress will be silenced by a dark and violent despotism." And when the boss talked, others followed: Israel is facing "a hostile situation" with "Turkey and Iran ... on the way up"; "Israel has been ousted from the Middle East"; "the greatest danger ... is Hamas and Jihad." They made Fox News' commentators look like peace-loving hippies.

The Israeli narrative is simple. This is an Iranian-like revolution helped by Al Jazeera and stupidly allowed by a new Jimmy Carter. Spearheading this interpretation are the former Israeli ambassadors to Egypt. All their frustration from being locked in an apartment hall in a Cairean high rise is now erupting like a volcano. Their tirade is summed up in the words of one: "this is bad for the Jews,

very bad." In Israel of course when you say bad for the Jews, you mean the Israelis — but you also mean that whatever is bad for Israel is bad for the Jews all around the world (despite the evidence to the contrary since the founding of the Jewish State).

What is really bad for Israel is the comparison with the Arab revolutions, which exposes the fallacies and pretense of the Jewish state like never before. Egypt's minister of Interior, who directed his thugs to attack demonstrators, will probably be brought to justice. Compare him to Yair Naveh, a candidate for the Chief of the General Staff in Israel. In 2008 he ordered troops to kill Palestinian suspects even if they could be peacefully arrested. He is not going to jail, but the Israeli soldier, Anat Kam, who exposed those orders, is now facing nine years in jail for leaking them to *Ha'aretz*. The light radiating from Egypt is so strong that it also illuminates the darker spaces of the "only democracy" in the Middle East.

Nonviolent, democratic Arabs (religious or not) are bad for Israel. But maybe these Arabs were there all the time, not only in Egypt, but also in Palestine. The insistence of Israeli commentators that the most important issue at stake is Israel's peace treaty with Egypt is a diversion. What is at stake is the pretense that Israel is a stable, civilized Western island in a rough sea of Asiatic barbarism and Arab fanaticism. The danger is that the cartography would be the same but the geography would change. It would still be an island, but of barbarism and fanaticism in a sea of newly formed democratic states.

In the eyes of civil society in the West the image of Israeli democracy vanished some time ago; it may now be tarnished in the eyes of those in power. Nonetheless, the cry rising from *Midan al-Tahrir* is a warning that the fake mythologies of the only democracy, hardcore Christian fundamentalism (far more sinister and corrupt than that of the Muslim Brotherhood), military-industrial profiteering, neo-conservatism and ruthless lobbying can-

not always guarantee the special relationship between Israel and the United States.

The diametrically opposed cases of the anti-U.S. regional powers of Iran and Syria, and to some extent Turkey, on the one hand, and the fallen pro-U.S. tyrant of Mubarak on the other, indicate that even if the special relationship is sustained, U.S. support may not be enough to maintain an ethnic and racist Jewish state in the heart of a changing Arab world.

This could have been good news for the Jews, even for the Jews in Israel. To be surrounded by peoples who cherish freedom, social justice and spirituality, and navigating sometimes safely and sometime roughly between tradition and modernity, nationalism and humanity, aggressive capitalist globalization and daily survival, is not going to be easy. But the democratic impulse carries hope of replacing more than a century of Zionist colonization and dispossession with a more equitable reconciliation with its Palestinian victims.

Trust the Israelis not to miss an opportunity to miss peace, however. They would cry wolf; they would demand, and receive, more funds from American taxpayers due to the "developments"; they would try to undermine any transition to democracy (remember the viciousness of their reaction to democratization in Palestinian society); and they would elevate Islamophobia to new heights.

Who knows? Maybe the American taxpayer would not budge this time and European politicians would heed the public sentiment and not only Egypt would end its autocratic regime — but so would Israel. It then would have a chance of being part of the changing real Middle East, and not the one it imagined and invented 60 years ago.

Ilan Pappé is Director of the European Center for Palestine Studies in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter and is co-author with Noam Chomsky of Gaza in Crisis: Reflections on Israel's War Against the Palestinians (Haymarket Books, 2010).



DONYATODD.CO.UK



CHRISTINE HALE

How Egypt’s Progressives Won

By PAUL AMAR

On Feb. 6, 2011, Egypt’s hastily appointed Vice President Omar Suleiman invited in the old guard or what we could call the Businessmen’s Wing of the Muslim Brotherhood into a stately meeting in the polished rosewood Cabinet Chamber of Mubarak’s Presidential Palace. The aim of their tea party was to discuss some kind of accord that would end the national uprising and restore “normalcy.” When news of the meeting broke, expressions of delight and terror tore through the blogosphere. Was the nightmare scenario of both the left and right about to be realized? Would the U.S.-Israel surrogate Suleiman merge his military-police apparatus with the power of the more conservative branch of the old Islamist social movement? Images of the Suleiman-Brotherhood tête-à-tête were broadcast at a time when Suleiman’s legitimacy was increasingly shaky within Egypt, and when this sub-group of Brothers, who represent only one fraction of one faction of the opposition, was trying to make an unlikely comeback. The commentators focusing on the Brotherhood had completely missed the real news. Egyptian newspaper *El-Masry El-Youm* reported that the Youth and Women’s Wings split off from the main Brotherhood organi-

zation to join the leftist April 6 Youth Movement. The men sitting around Suleiman’s table were left without much of a movement behind them. **BANDS OF BROTHERS** The Muslim Brotherhood is well organized in every Egyptian city, and provide health, education, legal aid and disaster relief to citizens ignored or neglected by the state. But it is not Egypt’s equivalent of Hezbollah or Hamas. As Mona El-Ghobashy has described, in the 1990s the Muslim Brotherhood broke with its secretive, hierarchical, shari’a-focused form. Today, it is a well-organized political party, officially banned but occasionally tolerated. In the past 20 years it has made significant inroads in parliament via alliances with other parties and by running independent candidates. The Brotherhood now fully supports political pluralism, women’s participation in politics and the role of Christians and communists as full citizens. However, with the rise of competing liberal and human-rights movements in Egypt in the 2000s, what one can call the “new old guard” of the Brotherhood (the one that emerged in the 1980s) has retained a focus on cultural, moral and identity politics. This faction sees moral-cultural conservatism as what distinguishes the Brotherhood from other parties, a fact it confirmed by appointing a

rigid social conservative, Muhammad Badeea, as leader in 2010. This turn was rejected by women and youth in the movement. This socially conservative leaning thus brings the “new old guard” more in line with the moralistic paternalism of the ousted Hosni Mubarak government and sets it against the trajectory of new youth, women’s and labor movements. This raises the possibility of splits in or the revitalization and reinvention of the Brotherhood, as the youth and women’s wings feel drawn toward the April 6 movement. The moral-cultural traditionalist wing of the “new old guard” is composed of professional syndicate leaders and wealthy businessmen. In the 1950s-80s, the movement regrouped and represented frustrated elements of the national bourgeoisie. But this class of people has largely been swept up into new opportunities and left the organization. In the past 10 years the Mubarak government partially co-opted this wing of the Brotherhood in two ways. First, Brothers were allowed to enter parliament as independent candidates and participate in the economic boom. Senior Brothers now own major cell phone companies and real estate developments and have been absorbed into the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) machine and upper-middle class establishment. Second, the government appropriated the Brotherhood’s moral discourse.

Mubarak’s police state stirred moral panics and waved the banner of Islam, attacking single working women, homosexuals, devil-worshipping internet users, trash-recycling pig herders and rent-control squatters, as well as Baha’i, Christian and Shi’a minorities. In its morality crusades, the Mubarak government burned books, harassed women and excommunicated college professors. Egyptians have thus already experienced rule by an extremely narrow Islamist state — Mubarak’s! And they hated it. In recent years, as described in the work of Saba Mahmood and Asef Bayat, people have grown disgusted by Mubarak’s politicization of Islam. Egyptians began to reclaim Islam as a project of personal self-governance, ethical piety and social solidarity. This trend explicitly rejects the political orientation of Islam and explicitly separates itself both from the Brotherhood’s activities and Mubarak’s morality crusades. **MILITARY’S MIDDLE CLASS POPULISM** The Muslim Brotherhood used to represent frustrated, marginalized elements of the middle class. Now a wide range of secular (but not anti-religious) groupings represent emergent economic patterns within the country. Moreover, these groups are swept up in a whirlwind of new political-economic energies coming from investors from Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Israel, Dubai,

China, Turkey and Brazil, as well as the remittances of Egyptian professionals who found employment in the emirates’ development boom. Within this new multi-dimensional globalization, in which East-West divides and postcolonial patterns are radically remade, the military presents an interesting economic mediator and success story. Prevented by the 1979 Camp David peace treaty from going to war, the military instead used its sovereignty over huge tracks of desert and coastal property to develop shopping malls, gated cities and beach resorts, catering to rich and middle-class Egyptians, local and international consumers, and tourists. The military’s position vis-à-vis the uprising is complicated. It hated the capitalists around Gamal Mubarak who sold off national lands, assets and resources to U.S. and European corporations. But the military also wants tourists, shoppers and investors for its multi-billion-dollar resorts and venues. The military identifies very strongly with representing and protecting “the people,” but also wants the people to go home and stop scaring away the tourists. The military will continue to straddle this position in interesting ways for years. Suleiman’s General Intelligence Services are nominally part of the military, but are institutionally separate. The intelligence sector is dependent on foreign patrons, primarily Israel and the United States, and is viewed skepti-

cally by Egyptians. But the actual Army and Air Force are grounded in the economic and social interests of national territory. The army’s role in countering Suleiman’s lust for repression was crucial to saving the uprising. On Feb. 4, the day of the terrifying police/thug brutality in Tahrir Square, commentators noted that the military was trying to stop the attacks but was not being very aggressive. We have since learned that soldiers in the square were not provided with bullets. Suleiman had disarmed them for fear the military would side with the protesters and use the ammunition to overthrow him. Bullets or no, the military displaced the police and took over security in public spaces in Cairo. Residential areas saw the return of a 21st-century version of *futuwwa* groups. As Wilson Jacob has described, in the 19th century *futuwwa* were icons of working-class national identity and community solidarity in Egypt. *Futuwwa* were organized groups of young men who defended craft guilds and working-class neighborhoods in Cairo. But the *futuwwa* reborn on Feb. 1 are called Peoples’ Committees and include men of all classes and ages and a few women with butcher knives, too. They stake out every street corner, vigilant for police and state-funded thugs who would try to arrest, intimidate or rob residents.

Continued on page 10



THE PEOPLE UNITED: Egypt celebrates the removal of the regime.



The Poetry of Revolt

By ELLIOTT COLLA

It is truly inspiring to see the bravery of Egyptians as they rose up and ended the criminal rule of Hosni Mubarak. It is especially inspiring to remember that what is happening is the culmination of years of work by activists from a spectrum of pro-democracy movements, human rights groups, labor unions and civil society organizations. No less astonishing is the poetry that has played a prominent role in these events. The slogans the protesters are chanting are couplets — and they are as loud as they are sharp. The *diwan* of this revolt began to be written as soon as Ben Ali fled Tunis, in pithy lines like “*Yâ Mubâarak! Yâ Mubâarak! Is-Sa’ûdiyya fi-tizârak!*” (“Mubarak, O Mubarak, Saudi Arabia awaits!”). In the streets themselves, there

are scores of other verses, ranging from the caustic “*Shurtat Masr, yâ shurtat Masr, intû ba’aytû kilâb al-’asr*” (“Egypt’s Police, Egypt’s Police, You’ve become nothing but Palace dogs”), to the defiant “*Idrab idrab yâ Habib, mahma tadrab mish hansib!*” (“Hit us, beat us, O Habib [al-Adly, now-former minister of the Interior], hit all you want — we’re not going to leave!”). This last couplet is particularly clever, since it plays on the old Egyptian colloquial saying, “*Darb al-habib zayy akl al-zabib*” (“The beloved’s fist is as sweet as raisins”). This poetry is not an ornament to the uprising — it is its soundtrack and also composes a significant part of the action itself. There is nothing unusual about poetry playing a galvanizing role in a revolutionary moment. And making revolution is not something new for Egyptians — having had no less than three “official” revolutions in the modern era: the 1881 Urabi Revolution that overthrew a corrupt and comprador royalty; the 1919 Revolution, that nearly brought down British military rule; and the 1952 Revolution that inaugurated 60 years of military dictatorships under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. The first revolution succeeded in establishing the second parliamentary government on the African continent before it was crushed by foreign military intervention. In the aftermath of defeat, the British established a rapacious colonial rule over Egypt for more than 70 years. The second revolution was a sustained, popular uprising led by a range of pro-democracy activists from a range of civil institutions. Though savagely repressed, it did force the British to grant some concessions. The third revolution officially celebrated in Egypt stands apart from the first two in that it was a coup d’etat that went out of its way to circumscribe popular participation. It was accepted in the moment since it finally ended the rule of the royal family first overthrown in 1881 and initiated a process of British withdrawal from Egypt.

Continued on page 13



STRIKE: Textile workers in the northern Egyptian town of Kaft al-Dawwar mark their February 2007 labor victory.

Joel Beinín is the Donald J. McLachlan professor of history and professor of Middle Eastern history at Stanford University. Between 2004 and 2009 Professor Beinín made multiple trips to Cairo, including two periods when he lived in Egypt. He interviewed Egyptian workers and explored both the history and the current state of the labor movement. Beinín summarized his findings in a report entitled *The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt*.

Could you describe what life is like for the typical middle-class urban worker in Cairo? **JB:** First of all, in Egypt, the word working class is not taboo. Workers are called workers and not middle class. And working class is a term that everybody understands. The typical monthly base salary for a textile worker is 400 Egyptian pounds a month. That’s about \$70. You also get incentive pay, bonuses of various sorts and so on. But if you put two salaries together

in a typical Egyptian family of five, you’re just above the poverty line (\$2.00 a day per person). According to the World Bank, 44 percent of the Egyptian people live under or just near the poverty line. Most urban workers are barely able to feed their families and to provide education for their children because the Egyptian public school system simply does not work. Everybody has to hire tutors for their children. People are constantly over their eyeballs in debt. The price of food has skyrocketed in the last five years, especially in the last several months. And people just cannot make it. Underlying all the political grievances that have come to light in the last week, in a very sharp way, are these economic problems, which have been going on for the last 20 years roughly. *In The Struggle for Workers Rights in Egypt you reference 1952 as the year that the “fundamentally autocratic power” of the Egyptian regime began. How have working conditions for the average Egyptian changed since then?*

JB: The regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers, which came to power in 1952 after a military coup that ousted the monarchy, certainly was autocratic. But, it was an authoritarian populist regime. From 1952 to about 1965-66, the standard of living of workers and peasants rose quite dramatically. There was not only a moderate land distribution for the peasantry but, even more importantly, imposition of rent control on Egyptian agricultural lands. Urban wages rose. A paid weekly day off was instituted. A minimum wage was instituted. Nasser, for these reasons and others, was wildly popular for most of his rule, except among those who he jailed and tortured, primarily the Muslim Brothers and the communists. This type of regime based on authoritarian populism and import-substitution industrialization was widely practiced throughout the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and also in Latin America. But it has some built-in problems that began to show by the mid to late ’60s. By the time Nasser died in

1970 it was becoming clear to some people that the country needed to go on a new path. Anwar Sadat, Nasser’s successor, announced in 1974 a new, economic policy called the open-door policy. This was the beginning of a very long and protracted process of privatizing the economy, cutting back state expenditures, reducing social services, reducing the subsidies on basic commodities that had been instituted even before Nasser came to power. It took from their proclamation in 1974 until the 1991 agreement with the World Bank and the IMF for these policies to become fully operational. When that happened, very quickly, standard of living, working conditions for workers began to decline. *In 1991, Egypt signed an economic reform agreement with World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to privatize the public sector. How did this move affect the nation’s laborers in subsequent years?* **JB:** Most people would agree that staffing in public enterprises in Egypt, especially textiles, which is the number-two industry in the coun-



try after food processing and canning, is perhaps 25 percent more than necessary. If you are a private entrepreneur and the government proposes to sell a textile plant, you don’t want those 25 percent extra workers because obviously, that’s going to cut into your profits. So the problem was, how do we get rid of them? The privatization program included legislation that a new employer who buys an enterprise cannot wholesale fire workers and has to provide the same level of wages and benefits as the workers previously enjoyed. In order to make that work, the government began to institute early-retirement schemes. They’d give anybody over a certain age about \$8,000–9,000, to retire. In Egypt, that’s a pretty substantial amount. You could buy a pickup truck. You could buy a grocery store. You could buy some agricultural land. You might survive okay if you took that. On that basis, some firms were sold off, but not enough. Then, a new government came into power — the one that’s just been dismissed — in July of 2004. And unlike all the previous governments, this government, which was nicknamed “the government of businessmen,” they were gung ho for this program. They privatized more in terms of total asset value in their first year in office than had been sold off in the previous ten years. And of course, doing everything at that pace made all sorts of problems. They didn’t offer people the same level of early retirement bonus so fewer people took it. Almost immediately in the second half of 2004, you see a big spike in the number of strikes, sit-ins and other kind of workers’ collective actions. *Your research indicates that civil unrest can be traced to labor disputes dating back to the early 1990s. Why weren’t the previous strikes and protests by Egyptian workers effective?* **JB:** In the 1980s and ’90s, there were several periods when there was an upsurge of strikes and other protests. Some of them were, in fact, effective. But quite often, the regime simply rolled in the tanks and gunned peo-

ple down, which meant that you thought many times before you went on strike or did anything like that. Gradually, the right to strike became more and more established after a supreme constitutional court ruling stating that the constitution did, in fact, permit people to strike. The government, the executive branch, which holds all the power, didn’t accept that and continued to repress striking workers. *Social media and the recent uprising in Tunisia have been cited as catalysts for spurring the revolution. Would you agree that those are the two most predominant contributing factors?* **JB:** When you put it that way, black and white, the answer has to be no. I don’t mean to say that they are not important because, of course, they are. But I would put the emphasis on the existence of a whole array of social, political, economic mobilizations that have been going on for the last decade. There were the popular committees in support of the Palestinian uprising in 2000, the popular committees opposed to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Egyptian Movement for Change in 2004-06, which was a pro-democracy movement that demanded that Mubarak not run for reelection in 2005, which of course he did. There was big support for the independence of the judiciary in the spring of 2006. In addition, and most important, there were over 3,000 strikes, sit-ins, and protests by over 2,000,000 workers since 1998. And that’s still going on. Every month, I get a new statement from one of the Egyptian NGOs. They’re counting them up by the day, and it’s still at the rate of hundreds per year. None of these things in and of themselves led directly to what’s happened since January 25th. But cumulatively they had a big impact on people’s consciousness and sense of the possibilities for resistance to the regime. *Excerpted from humanexperience.stanford.edu.*

Is It Algeria's Turn?

BY JOHN TARLETON

Algeria is the world's fourth largest exporter of natural gas and the eighth largest exporter of oil at 1.9 million barrels per day. Yet, this resource-rich nation of 35 million people is plagued by large income disparities, high youth unemployment, poor housing and a sclerotic political system that has produced a series of military-backed strongmen who have led the country since it won its independence from France in 1962.

Thanks to these powder-keg conditions, Algeria's current dictator, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, is on the short list of Arab despots who could next be ousted from power by their own people.

Algeria briefly experimented with multi-party democracy and an independent press in the late 1980s following massive demonstrations against IMF-mandated austerity measures. This political opening abruptly ended in 1992 when the military cancelled elections that an Islamist party was on the verge of sweeping and declared a state of emergency that continues to this day. The 10-year civil war that followed pitted the government against several Islamic insurgent groups, leaving as many as 200,000 dead.

While Algeria still maintains close relations with France, Bouteflika moved quickly after the 9/11 attacks to cash in on Algeria's "counter-terrorism" expertise and strengthen ties with the United States. Algeria became a key U.S. ally in the struggle against "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," a force of no more than 200 fighters. It is the focal point of a \$500 million, Pentagon-led counter-terrorism initiative involving Algeria and at least eight other North and West African nations. In return, Algeria has received increased U.S. military aid and training.

When protests erupted in Algeria in

January following the Tunisian uprising, the Bouteflika regime sought to placate the public by lowering the price of staples such as sugar and rice. Another round of protests broke out after Egypt's Hosni Mubarak fell from power. On the day following Mubarak's ouster, an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 protesters defied a government ban and marched in the capital city of Algiers in the face of as many as 30,000 riot police. More than 400 demonstrators were arrested. According to Al Jazeera English, the protesters were an amalgam of "opposition parties, civil society movements and unofficial unions." Expect to see more protests in coming weeks.

The Revolution Is in Our Hands

BY ALI ABUNIMAH

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority (PA) of Mahmoud Abbas is in a more precarious situation than ever. Its loss of legitimacy is so thorough — especially after the revelations in the Palestine Papers — that it exists only thanks to the protection of the Israeli occupation, U.S. and EU training of its repressive security forces, and massive EU funding to pay the salaries of its bloated bureaucracy.

The PA's leaders are as dead to the just cause and aspirations for liberation of the Palestinian people for which so much has been sacrificed, as Mubarak was to the Egyptian people's rights and hopes. No wonder the PA relies more and more on the thuggery and police state tactics so reminiscent of Hosni Mubarak and Ben Ali.

The revolutions in the Arab world have

lifted our horizons. More people can now see that the liberation of Palestine from Zionist colonialism and U.S.- and EU-funded oppression, to make it a safe, humane place for all who live in it to exist in equality, is not just a utopian slogan but is in our hands if we struggle for it and stick to our principles. Like the people power, against which the Egyptian and Tunisian police states were powerless in the end, Palestinians and their allies (particularly those supporting the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement) have the power to transform reality within the next few years.

In whatever form the revolution continues, the people are saying to their rulers: our countries, our futures, don't belong to you any more. They belong to us.

Excerpted from ElectronicIntifada.net.



How Egyptians Won

Continued from page 9

Given the threat of sexualized violence from the police/thugs, there is a gender dimension to this uprising. Huge numbers of women participated in the revolt. Then the police/thugs started targeting women, molesting, detaining and raping them. When the police were driven back, the military and the *futuwwa* groups took over and insisted that "protecting" the people involved excluding women and children from public spaces, particularly Tahrir Square. But women in this revolt insist they are not victims who need protection, they are the leading core of this movement. On Feb. 7, women's groups, including the April 6 movement, anti-harassment, civil rights groups and the Women's Wing of the Brotherhood, reemerged in downtown Cairo by the hundreds of thousands.

On Jan. 28 the headquarters of Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party burned down, and with it his substantive authority was turned to ashes. The rising military and national-capital interests then buried those ashes on Feb. 5. On that day, they ensured that Gamal Mubarak would resign as head of the NDP's Political Office. In his place, Dr. Hosam Badrawi was named the new Secretary-General of the party.

The choice of Badrawi reflects the direction the winds are blowing. Badrawi holds the dubious honor of founding Egypt's first private-sector HMO in 1989. All Egyptians

are constitutionally guaranteed access to free, universal healthcare. But Mubarak, under orders from the IMF, made draconian cuts to the public health service beginning in the 1980s. Badrawi has championed the privatization of healthcare, and created a national private healthcare industry with significant capital and legitimacy. This industry is threatened by global competition and describes itself in nationalistic, paternalistic tones. Serving as a vehicle for foreign investment, Gamal Mubarak posed a threat to national businessmen like Badrawi. Badrawi is also a former director of the NDP's human rights organization, a particularly contradictory job to hold during a time of mass repression and torture.

Naguib Sawiris, the self-proposed chair of the "Transitional Council of Wise Men," is similar to Badrawi. A patriotic, successful nationalist businessman, Sawiris heads the largest private-sector company in Egypt, Orascom. This firm has built railways, beach resorts, gated cities, highways, telecom systems, wind farms, condos and hotels. He is a major regional financier. He is also the banner carrier for Egypt's developmentalist nationalists.

On Feb. 4 Sawiris proposed the Council of Wise Men to oversee Suleiman and the police and to lead Egypt through the transition. The council would be a so-called "neutral, technocratic" body that would include Sawiris, along with a couple of non-ideological members of the Muslim Brotherhood's businessmen's wing, some strategic-studies experts, and a Nobel Prize winner. Not Mo-

ammed ElBaradei, the peace laureate and opposition leader; they found an Egyptian laureate in organic chemistry instead.

WOMEN, MICRO-BUSINESS & WORKERS

By early February a coalition emerged of nationalist businessmen allied with a military that also acts like nationalist middle-class businessmen. This group ejected the "crony globalizers" and "barons of privatization" surrounding Gamal Mubarak and finally Hosni Mubarak himself.

Would this group then cement its hold on power with Suleiman as its hammer? No.

Other social forces are also at work. They are well organized. Legitimacy, organization, new vision and economic power are in their hands. The new nationalist business-military bloc cannot develop the country without their participation and mobilization.

This uprising began gradually with the convergence of two parallel forces: the movement for workers' rights in the newly revived factory towns and micro-sweatshops of Egypt, especially during the last two years, and the movement against police brutality and torture that mobilized every community in the country for the last three



TANKS FOR THE HELP: Egyptians wonder if the military will give up power.

No Pink Slip for Yemen's Salih

BY STACEY PHILBRICK YADAV

In recent months, large protests have unfolded in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa and other major cities across the country. The protests have been organized by a cross-ideological amalgam known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), and have been identifiable by their deployment of pink-tinted protest paraphernalia – sashes, hats, posters, flyers and more.

These protests seem to have generated substantial concessions from President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, who has occupied some form of executive office since 1978. (Modern-day Yemen came into existence in 1990 with the unification of North Yemen, of which Salih was president, and the socialist South.) Salih pledged on Feb. 2 to abandon efforts to run again or engineer the succession of his son, Ahmad, to the presidency. Much as these steps might appear to presage far-reaching political change in Yemen there are good reasons for skepticism.

The demands of the political opposition in Yemen align in some ways with those of pro-democracy protesters in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere, but in many more ways they diverge. And like his fellow autocrats, Salih has many tools for staving off the sort of reform that would strip him and his inner circle of power.

The Yemeni opposition has coalesced for nearly a decade around an alliance of leftist, secular liberal, nationalist and various Islamist trends, the JMP, whose programs do not always match up.

The leadership of the Yemeni Socialist Party, for example, is divided over whether and to what extent to align with the demands of the Southern Movement (also called al-Harak), the grassroots grouping agitating for greater autonomy for the southern provinces and, increasingly, secession. Islah, the largest Islamist party in the JMP, is split over, among other issues, the role of women in the party and in Yemen's larger political sphere. Each of these divisions divides the alliance and the parties within it – and the regime deftly exploits the gaps.

The opposition has been systematically undermined by the Salih regime, which is employing stepped-up U.S. military aid to expand the security services capacity for surveillance and coercion. While the Yemeni press is far freer than many in the region, including Egypt's, it is embattled. The government's assault on the media has intensified as Yemen's relationship with the United States has grown closer since September 11, 2001.

The Obama administration has more than doubled military aid, from \$67 million in 2009 to \$150 million in 2010. WikiLeaks cables show that U.S. aid has been directed to the fight against the regime's domestic opponents, particularly the Houthi rebels in the north, with the knowledge of CentCom commander Gen. David Petraeus and, thus, all the major players in Washington.

DIVERGENT GROUPS

The Yemeni opposition is composed of several groups, some of which are coherent and others only loose formations, and which compete with each other and (importantly) within their own ranks as often as they cooperate.

Notable are the armed groups. In the northern province of Saada, on the border with Saudi Arabia, the rebellion led by members of the Houthi family has entered into its sixth ceasefire in only seven years, with considerable loss of civilian life caused by government attacks on displaced persons camps. In the South, what began in 2007 as a peaceful protest movement calling for a more equitable distribution of state resources and political power was repressed so forcefully that some of its members have started to shoot back.

Then there is al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a franchise of unknown size that is

nesting in Yemen's more remote regions, where the state's writ is shaky at best. Complicating the picture is the Salih regime's relationship to radical Islamist militants. While formally committed to Washington's counter-terrorism operations, Salih has maintained close ties to conservative cleric 'Abd al-Majid al-Zindani and his fellows, who encourage vigilante violence and are accused of helping to recruit and indoctrinate militants.

The current round of civil protests, how-



STAYING POWER: President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has ruled since 1978.

ever, is led by none of these groups. The JMP coalition's efforts to construct itself as a "loyal opposition" are clearly distinct from the rhetoric of open revolt elsewhere in Yemen, and bear little resemblance to the diffuse, bottom-up movement in Egypt.

JMP protests in Sanaa resemble opposition rallies, with distinguished speakers enumerating demands to cheering, chanting crowds in

color-coordinated costume. Even the hue of pink, the "color of love," was chosen to highlight the civil, warm-hearted nature of the protests. The opposition's demands, however, are substantive, and display little tenderness for the Salih regime.

The JMP, as an umbrella for Islamist, Socialist, Nasserist and other smaller parties, has been in existence since 2002. It reached the apex of its political power when it fielded a consensus candidate to run against Salih in the 2006 presidential election. While the JMP's man, Faysal bin Shamlan, won only 23 percent of the vote, he is credited with making Salih promise a number of reforms that he would otherwise have held in reserve.

But since 2006 the JMP has been torn apart by divisions over ideology and strategy. The cleavages were thrown into sharp relief by the anticipated rise of al-Harak, the Southern secessionist movement, whose platform overlaps with the JMP's. Some JMP leaders have tried to capitalize on the popularity of al-Harak, but others fear the costs of being associated with a cause that speaks of secession.

The JMP, even as protests continue, remains preoccupied with the "court politics" of the capital and struggles to articulate demands that can span the ideological stretch of its member parties. This difficulty has meant each group has abandoned significant objectives, with the risk that core supporter will be alienated. But everyone agrees on increased transparency, accountability, reduced corruption and a bigger voice for Yemenis across the political spectrum. Primary among these demands is genuine electoral reform, particularly proportional representation to blunt the force of the ruling party.

Continued on page 12

years. Both movements feature the leadership and mass participation of women of all ages and youth of both genders.

The passion of workers who began this uprising stems from their centrality to new development processes. Egypt has reemerged as a manufacturing country with new factories being built in a flurry of contentious global investment. Several Russian free-trade zones and manufacturing settlements have opened up, and China has invested in all parts of the Egyptian economy. Brazil, Turkey, the Central Asian Republics and the Gulf emirates are diversifying their investments. They are moving out of the oil sector and real estate and into manufacturing, piece goods, informatics and infrastructure.

All over Egypt factories have been reopened or newly built. And the shopping malls, gated cities, highways and resorts have to be built and staffed by someone. In the Persian Gulf, developers use Bangladeshi, Philippine and other expatriate labor. But Egypt usually uses its own workers.

Many of the workers in Egypt's revived textile and piece-work industries are women. Inside large working-class apartment buildings in the margins of Cairo and the cement-block constructions of the villages are workshops full of women making purses and shoes and putting together toys and computer circuit boards for sale in Europe, the Middle East and the Gulf. These shop workers joined with factory workers to found the April 6 movement in 2008.

They began the organizing process that led to this current uprising, whose eruption

was triggered by Asmaa Mahfouz's passionate YouTube video. Ms. Mahfouz, a political organizer with an MBA from Cairo University, called people to protest on Jan. 25. Many Cairenes answered her call and distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in the slums of Cairo on Jan. 24, the day before the mass protests began. The rest is history.

LET THEM EAT DEBT

The economic gender and class landscape of Egypt's micro-businesses has been politicized and mobilized in dynamic ways. Since the early 1990s, Egypt has cut back welfare and social services to working-class and lower-middle-class Egyptians. As Julia Elyachar has argued, in the place of food subsidies and jobs the state offered debt. Micro-credit loans were given, with the IMF and World Bank's enthusiastic blessing, to stimulate entrepreneurship and self-reliance. These loans were often specifically targeted toward women and youth. Since economically disadvantaged applicants have no collateral to guarantee these loans, payback is enforced by criminal law rather than civil law. This means that your body is your collateral. The police extract pain and humiliation if you do not pay your bill. Thus the micro-enterprise system has become a massive set of police rackets and loan-shark operations.

Sexualized brutalization of youth and women by the police became central to the "regulation" of the massive small-business economy. The micro-business economy is a tough place to operate, but it does shape women and youth into tough survivors who see themselves as an organized force

opposed to the police state. No one here praises the blessings of the market's invisible hand. The economic interests of this mass class of micro-entrepreneurs are the basis for the huge and passionate anti-police brutality movement. The movement became a national force two years ago with the police murder of a youth, Khalid Saeed, who was typing away in a small internet cafe that he partially owned. Police demanded ID and a bribe from him. He refused, and the police beat him to death, crushing his skull while the whole community watched in horror.

Police demanding bribes, harassing micro-businesses and beating those who refuse to submit had become standard practice. The landscape of internet cafes, small workshops, call-centers, video-game cafes, microbuses, laundromats and small gyms constitutes the jobs base and social world of Egypt's lower middle classes. The "Facebook Revolution" is not about people mobilizing in virtual space. It is about the youth and women they represent, in real social spaces and communities, utilizing the cyberspace bases they have built and developed to serve their revolt.

During the Iranian Revolution in the 1970s, the "bazaaris of Tehran," the medium-sized merchants and shop owners, served as the crucial "swing vote" that moved the Revolution from a socialistic uprising toward the founding of an Islamic Republic.

In Egypt, the social and political force of women and youth micro-entrepreneurs will lead history in the opposite direction. These groups have a sophisticated view of the moral posturing of some Islamists, and

they have a clear socio-economic agenda, which appeals to the dynamic Youth Wing of the Brotherhood. The progressive groups have a linked network of enterprises, factories, identities and passions. They would go to any length to prevent the reemergence of police brutality and moralistic hypocrisy that have ruled them for the past generation. The women and youth behind these micro-businesses, and the workers in the new factories seem to be united.

Micro-entrepreneurs, new workers groups and massive anti-police brutality organizations do not share the same class position as Sawiris, Badrawi and those in the Council of Wise Men. Nevertheless, there are significant overlaps and affinities between the nationalist development-oriented groups, the newly entrepreneurial military, and the well-organized youth and women's social movements. This confluence of social, historical and economic dynamics will ensure that the uprising does not get reduced to a photo opportunity.

Paul Amar is Associate Professor of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His books include Cairo Cosmopolitan and the forthcoming Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics and the End of Neoliberalism. A version of this article was originally published by jadaliyya.com.



WATCH GRITtv AT 8 PM AND 9 AM ON MNN CHANNEL 34

PEOPLES' VOICE



Feb 26: Hawaiian Music & Dance Night

*Mar 5: Robin Bady; Deni Bonet;
The Brooklyn Community Storytellers*

Mar 12: Brooklyn Women's Chorus

Mar 19: Dan Schatz; Alan Friend

Mar 26: Adele Rolider; the Raging Grannies

Apr 2: Johnson Girls; Dan Milner

★ SATURDAYS AT 8 P.M. ★

Community Church of New York Unitarian-Universalist
40 E. 35th St. (Madison/Park)
New York, NY 10016

doors open 7:30; space is accessible
212-787-3903

www.peoplesvoicecafe.org



Tehran

Continued from page 7

In September 2009, Hassan Firouzabadi, head of the joint chiefs of staff of the Iranian armed forces, announced a shift from an ideological to a pragmatic approach to supporting Palestinian and other movements such as Hezbollah. Adopting this new tack, he said, was “a kind of investment in acquiring regional and international leverage”, and was also in the best interests of national security, by ensuring that conflict does not take place close to Iran.

Pragmatism includes not investing solely in Islamist groups abroad as instruments of foreign policy.

For three decades, Tehran has sought to establish links with the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, but its efforts have been stymied by the Hashemite monarchy, leading to a troubled diplomatic relationship. Last November, the Iranian ambassador was summoned by officials in Amman after he had contacted the Jordanian Engineers' Association, one of the biggest unions in the country, suggesting that officials were worried that Tehran was exploring alternative avenues.

In Lebanon, Progressive Socialist Party head Walid Jumblatt is now a partner with

his former sworn enemy Hezbollah, and he met President Ahmadinejad on the latter's recent trip to the country.

Tehran is thus positioned to engage with Egypt's new government. For example, the secular Mohamed ElBaradei is viewed favorably by Tehran since, as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, he resisted U.S. pressure to accuse Iran of producing nuclear weapons.

Mubarak's departure will almost certainly be followed by the reopening of the Iranian embassy — absent from Cairo for almost 32 years — and could bring an end to the enmity between the two countries that has persisted for over five decades.

Iran's position in the Middle East has rarely been better as U.S.-backed states founder one after another.

“The new Middle East is taking shape,” wrote Hossein Shariatmadari, who is the editor-in-chief of the hard-line daily *Iranian Kayhan* and is close to Supreme Leader Khamenei. “Contrary to [ex-U.S. president George] Bush's wishes, it is being formed with Iran at the center.”

Ali Reza Eshraghi is the editor of the Iran Program at the Institute for War & Peace Reporting. A version of this article was originally published at iwpr.net.

Yemen

Continued from page 11

The government has oscillated between guarded tolerance and suppression of the protests. In a move from Mubarak's playbook, it has reportedly deployed plainclothes police and hired thugs to harass peaceful protesters, especially women, in an effort to provoke a response that would justify retaliation with brute force. In another echo of Egyptian events, the government has staged counter-protests in support of the regime and called out the armed forces to contain any clash that might just happen to erupt between the regime backers and the JMP.

Salih's Feb. 2 promises are unlikely to convince anyone. Before the 2006 presidential campaign, for example, he vowed not to run, so that Yemen could be governed by “young blood.” But as the election approached, he made an elaborate show of bowing to a popular will that, supposedly, demanded his return to the presidential palace.

When Salih announced that he would not run again and would not pass the presidency on to his son, he was answering the calls of protests in Cairo against Hosni Mubarak and family. Salih is trying to link Cairo and Sanaa in the minds of Western policymakers, so that they will fear the spread of chaos and endorse the status quo.

As the headlines fade, Salih could dig in, refusing to yield to protesters' more substantive demands, and continuing to govern through managed chaos, leveraging the crisis for more foreign aid. With U.S. and Saudi military assistance at an all-time high, Salih's ability to monitor and suppress the opposition, and then use his large parliamentary majority to further consolidate his power, cannot be dismissed.

Stacey Philbrick Yadav is assistant professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. This is excerpted from merip.org.

Poetry in Revolt

Continued from page 8

Besides these three state-commemorated events, Egyptians have revolted against the corruption, greed and cruelty of their rulers many more times in the last 60 years. On Jan. 26, 1952, Egyptians emerged onto the streets to protest an array of issues — including the corruption of the monarchy, the decadence, power and privilege of foreign business elites, and the open-ended British occupation. The revolt was quickly suppressed, though the damage to property was massive, and it set in motion an exodus of foreign elites — and the military coup months later. In 1968, Egyptian students launched huge and daring protests against the repressive policies of Nasser's police state. In the early 1970s, Egyptian students engaged in sustained mass protests against the radical political reorientations of the new Sadat regime — and eventually forced the state to re-engage in military confrontation with Israel.

On Jan. 18–19, 1977 Egyptians rose up en masse to protest IMF austerity measures imposed on the country by the corrupt, inept and ruthless regime of Anwar Sadat. The Egyptian president was already on his jet ride into exile before the Central Security Forces and Army finally gained the upper hand. During the early 1990s, Islamist protests against the authoritarian rule of Mubarak escalated into armed conflict, both in the slums of the cities and in Upper

Egypt. Hundreds of militants, soldiers and civilians were killed before the revolt was finally suppressed.

This list leaves out other significant moments of mass civil protest and contestation — like the massive protests against the First Gulf War, the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Israel's attacks on Lebanon and Gaza — but even so, the tally is impressive: no less than 10 major revolts and revolutions in 130 years. Modern Egyptians have never passively accepted the failed colonial or postcolonial states that fate has dealt them.

Many of these revolts have had their own poets. 1881 had the neo-classical *qasidas* of Mahmoud Sami al-Baroudi; 1919, the colloquial *zajals* of Bayram al-Tunsi. Salah Jahin became one of the leading colloquial poets of the 1952 Revolution, and his patriotic verse became core material for Abdel Halim Hafez, who pinned his career to Nasser. From the same period, Fu'ad Haddad's *mawwals* also stand out — and are still sung today. Since the 1970s, it has been Ahmed Fouad Negm who has played the leading role as lyricist of militant opposition to the regimes of Egypt. For 40 years, Negm's colloquial poems — many set to music by Sheikh Imam — have electrified student, labor and dissident movements from the Egyptian underclass. Negm's poetry ranges from praise (*madh*) for the courage of ordinary Egyptians, to invective (*hija'*) for Egypt's overlords — and it is no accident that you could hear his songs being sung by the

The -String

BY STEVE WISHNIA

Blacks and Jews have been among the most hated peoples in the history of the world. One manifestation of this shared bond is the alliance between Jews and blacks in the civil rights movement.

Another way these two communities are intertwined is in musical history. The stories of Jews as fans and emulators of Afro-American music have been well told, along with their role as entrepreneurs recording black artists from blues to hip-hop. A new CD, *Black Sabbath: The Secret Musical History of Black-Jewish Relations* (The Idelsohn Society), spotlights a little-known third dimension: Jewish influence on black musicians.

The album contains 15 recordings of black artists doing traditionally Jewish or Jewish-inflected material, from Billie Holiday's home-recorded version of "My Yiddishe Momma" to Johnny Mathis singing the Yom Kippur prayer "Kol Nidre." Their motives were a mix of artistic, empathetic and commercial. The liner notes quote Ethel Waters saying the Jewish history of "age-old grief and despair is so similar to that of my own people that I felt I was telling the story of my own race too." Then again, she'd also pack theaters with Jewish people who'd excitedly exclaim "the *schvartze* sings 'Eli, Eli!'"

Some of the music here is very kitschy, novelty or showtune-style records aimed at the suburban Jewish culture of the Rat Pack, *Mad Men* era, a world bookended by *Exodus* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. The Temptations' 10-minute medley of songs from *Fiddler* is not something I'm likely to play much in the future, despite its good bassline and inimitable Temptations harmonies; ditto for Lena Horne's adaptation of the "Hava Nagila" melody into a liberal civil-rights anthem. On the other hand, I like Cab Calloway's jive-talking anglicization of the Yiddish song "Ot Azoy."

When these songs work they have the best of both worlds, Jewish *neshuma* and black soul. Billie Holiday transcends the gooey sentimentality of "My Yiddishe Momma" by

singing it like herself, a tour de force of love, regret and compassion. (The performance was intended to amuse a friend's baby.) Cannonball Adderley's brilliant "Sabbath Prayer," an instrumental from *Fiddler*, sounds like an impassioned, more structured outtake from Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*.

That unveils the deeper, more subtle influences Jewish music has had on jazz. Miles' modal explorations may have been inspired by seeing klezmer clarinetist Dave Tarras play in the Catskills. Louis Armstrong grew up singing with Russian-Jewish immigrants in New Orleans, and you can hear the connection in the minor-key laments of "West End Blues" and "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue." The bent notes of the blues parallel the *krekhts* of klezmer.

KLEZMER AGAINST THE WALL

Most current klezmer musicians avoid talking about the Middle East. There is no political subject harder to have a rational discussion about, especially within the Jewish community. Saying that Palestinians have human rights and legitimate grievances will get you denounced as a "self-hating Jew" feeding terrorism and "delegitimization" in many Jewish circles; while in many leftist/progressive circles, saying that Israel has a right to exist in peace will get you shlogged with spiels about Zionist occupational atrocities. The klezmer revival of the last 35 years has had elements of a Yiddishist, secular counterweight to the theocratically fanatical nationalism of the Jewish right, but its musicians and audience range from atheist to Hasidic.

Into this mix drops *Klezmer Against the Wall* (RWE), a compilation of 15 klezmer bands from the U.S. and Europe who "support opposition to Israeli apartheid and occupation through nonviolent protest, targeted boycotts, civil disobedience, and direct action." *Nu...* so what's the music sound like?

I tend to prefer the more traditional-style material, such as the Just Desserts' "Frey-lekh" and Inner Fire District's "Symposium of Crabs," a melange of familiar hooks and

melodies; they're not earth-shaking, but they're played with passion and drive. The more modernistic, complex cuts veer into excessively busy jazz-fusion or Zappaesque turf, although I can imagine the Free Radicals' "Mosh Hashanah" growing on me. The update I like best is Go Van Gogh's "Oif der Fater," which melds a soulful Yiddish melody with a guitar-chinking funk-reggae groove.

BUBBE'S BEAT BOX

When klezmer drummer Elaine Hoffman Watts returned to playing in the early '90s, she was greeted like a long-lost blues artist. Hoffman comes from a leading family in the Philadelphia klezmer world: She's the granddaughter of bandleader Joseph Hoffman, the daughter of percussionist Jacob Hoffman, and the mother of trumpeter Susan Watts. She was one of the few women drummers anywhere in the '50s, although her career encountered resistance from those ret-

rograde souls who believed she lacked an essential body part (one it would be quite painful to hit a rim-shot with).

Now a grandmother, she has a new album out, *Elaine Hoffman Watts: A Living Tradition* (Living

Traditions). At her recent show on the Lower East Side with her daughter Susan Watts, there were several klezmer drummers in the house. Hoffman Watts is a drum virtuoso, but always in the service of the song, from quasi-martial rolls to propel a dance groove or dramatize a slow waltz to the tom-tom counterpoint on her version of Naftule Brandwein's "Araber Tanz."

Playing with her daughter offers plenty of opportunities for family shtick. At the LES show, she quipped that Susan hired her "because I work cheap." Meanwhile, in the liner notes to an earlier album, Susan Watts confesses that her illustrious forebears "were all a little *meshugah*."

leftist activists who spearheaded the first day of revolt on Jan. 25. Besides these poets, we could add many others — Naguib Surur, Abd al-Rahman al-Abnoudi, Tamim Barghouti — who have added to this literary-political tradition in their own ways.

Beyond these recognized names are thousands of other poets — activists all — who would never dare to protest publicly without an arsenal of clever couplet-slogans. The end result is a unique literary tradition whose power is now on full display across Egypt. Chroniclers of the current Egyptian revolt, like As'ad AbuKhalil, have already compiled lists of these couplets — and hundreds more are sure to come. For the most part, these poems are composed in a colloquial, not classical, register and they are extremely catchy and easy to sing. The genre also has real potential for humor and play — reminding us of the fact that revolution is also a time for celebration and laughter.

HOW TO DO THINGS WITH POETRY

The poetry of this revolt is not reducible to a text that can be read and translated in words, for it is also an act in and of itself. That is, the couplet-slogans being sung and chanted by protesters do more than reiterate complaints and aspirations that have been communicated in other media. This poetry has the power to express messages that could not be articulated in other forms, as well as to sharpen demands.

Consider the most prominent slogan be-

ing chanted today by thousands of people in Tahrir Square: "*Ish-sha'b/lyu-rîd/is-qât/in-ni-zâm*." Rendered into English, it might read, "The people want the regime to fall" — but that would not begin to translate the power this simple yet complex couplet-slogan has in its context.

There are real poetic reasons why it emerged as a central slogan. For instance, unlike the more ironic — humorous or bitter — slogans, this one is sincere and states it all clearly. Likewise, the register of this couplet straddles colloquial Egyptian and standard media Arabic — and it is thus readily understandable to the massive Arab audiences who are watching and listening. And finally, like all the other couplet-slogans being shouted, this has a regular metrical and stress pattern (in this case: short-LONG, short-LONG, short-LONG, short-SHORT-LONG). While unlike most others, this particular couplet is not rhymed, it can be sung and shouted by thousands of people in a unified, clear cadence — and that seems to be a key factor in why it works so well.

The prosody of the revolt suggests that there is more at stake in these couplet-slogans than the creation and distillation of a purely semantic meaning. For one thing, the act of singing and shouting with large groups of fellow citizens has created a certain and palpable sense of community that had not existed before. And the knowledge that one belongs to a movement bound by a positive collective ethos

is powerful in its own right — especially in the face of a regime that has always sought to morally denigrate all political opposition.

Likewise, the act of singing invective that satirizes feared public figures has an immediate impact that cannot be explained in terms of language, for learning to laugh at one's oppressor is a key part of unlearning fear. Indeed, witnesses to the revolt have consistently commented that in the early hours of the revolt — when invective was most ascendant — protesters began to lose their fear.

And having lost that fear, Egyptians are showing no signs of wanting to go back. As the Mubarak regime unleashed more violence, the recitation of these couplet-slogans continued, as if the act of repeating them helps the protesters concentrate on their core principles and demands.

POETRY AND CONTINGENCY

Anyone who has ever chanted slogans in a public demonstration has also probably asked herself at some point: why am I doing this? The question provokes a feeling of embarrassment, the suspicion that the gesture might be rote and thus empty and powerless. Arguably, this nervousness is a form of performance anxiety that, if taken seriously, might remind us that the ritual of singing slogans was invented precisely because it has the power to accomplish things.

When philosophers speak of "doing things with words," they also remind us that

the success of the locutionary act is tied to the conditions in which it is performed. This is another way to say that any speech act is highly contingent — its success only occurs in particular circumstances, and even then, its success is never a given. Success, if it is to occur, happens only in the doing of it.

Since Jan. 25, Egyptians have leapt into the uncertainty of this revolutionary performance. They have now crossed multiple thresholds — and each time, they have acted with no guarantee of success. This is, I think, the core of their astonishing courage: at each point it has been impossible to say that victory is already theirs.

Those who decide to make their own history are not only required to write their own script and build their own stage, they are also then compelled to play the new roles with enough force and conviction to make it cohere, even in the face of overwhelming violence. The poetry of the streets is another form of writing, of redrafting the script of history in the here and now — with no assurances of victory and everything in the balance.

Elliott Colla is Chair of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University and author of *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity. A version of this article was originally published by jadaliyya.com.*

Opening a Path to the Future

The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development
MICHAEL A. LEBOWITZ
MONTHLY REVIEW, 2010

Few books provide the clarity of vision and practical lessons that Michael Lebowitz's *The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development* offers. Lebowitz outlines both strategic and tactical applications that will be of great value for anyone seriously interested in participating in the struggle to build a viable global socialist alternative to the dangerous and destructive capitalist system. This is especially important for those of us in the United States, where the forms of domination seem stronger and it seems more difficult to muster a sustained, critical mass of opposition.

Lebowitz restates the forms of struggle against the capitalist system in ways that allow the reader to understand the importance of moving beyond the domination of capital with clarity and practicality. He points out that the essential problem is workers' cooperation with their own destruction — by "selling out" their labor and, thus, their collective power, to the capitalists. This amounts to a "free gift to capital" and from that moment on, labor is compromised and a "we are not" mentality dominates labor and forces it into a defensive and very difficult position. Worker control, community control and self-management by the associated producers are ways to counter this



loss of subjective and objective power and begin building socialism in the 21st century.

Lebowitz spells out the steps we need to go through for labor to reconquer the position of the subject in the historical process and the very real differences between the capitalist road and the labor road to the future. This is one of the very best books on the issue of transition from capitalism to a viable socialist alternative in our time.

—IRVING KURKI

Tangled Histories

"Ladies First: Beyond 28 Days"
BRECHT FORUM
451 WEST ST
THROUGH MARCH 1

The Brecht Forum — a committed bastion of radical political thought — strives to maintain a vital discourse with the revolutionary past. So then, what to make of an art exhibit there that, at times, isn't overtly political?

The Brecht is currently hosting "Ladies First," an exhibition of work by Black female artists that seeks to explore the complexities of Black American history within an expressly revolutionary space.

There's Miatta Kawinzi's *Konstruk* (2010) — a mournful daub of Basquiat-like graffiti; or Al J. Hamilton's *Momo's Wigs* (2010) — a fairly classical still-life photo of wigs and toys. There's also Jacqueline Amos' late-'90s artworks: lyrical, tumescent, church-y paintings of Black folks in heaven.

Kawinzi's painting suggests the interwoven pasts of ancient African art, Western graffiti and the bursting Black avant-garde. Hamilton's photo reminds viewers that the struggles (and joys) of queer selfhood have a place in any history. Other works in the show look at (or through) quilting, mysticism, feminist performance, tribes, collage,

myth-making and portraiture.

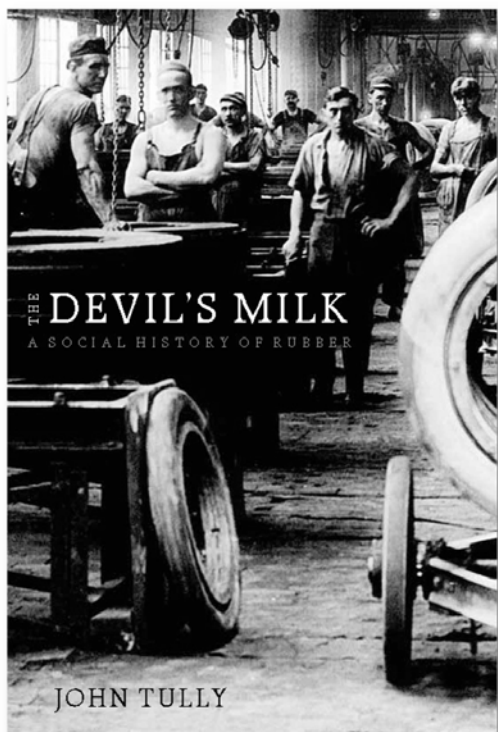
In this context of tangled histories, the knottiest things are those Amos paintings. The characters are pared-down and jet-black, nodding to 18th century silhouette portraits, ancient depictions of the figure and a raw, dichotomous concept of Black identity. Oceanic, blue-white smears — representing Heavenly clouds — echo the grand history of American abstract painting. The African-inflected aesthetic married with high-Christian imagery reflects on one of the most pertinent and difficult historical narratives of the Diaspora. The paintings, and the exhibit, are affable,



Micaela Anaya, *The Seer* (2011).
PHOTO: ETHAN DANIEL/BRECHT FORUM

conversational, a bit ramshackle (the Brecht Forum isn't really an art gallery), but also as dense and complex as you'd like them to be. So much history, so close to home.

— MIKE NEWTON



THE DEVIL'S MILK

a social history of rubber

by John Tully

join the author @
the BRECHT FORUM
Tues. February 22
7:30 PM

co-sponsored by Monthly
Review Press
& *The Independent*

451 West Street
(between Bank & Bethune)

available now from
MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS
www.monthlyreview.org
800.670.9499
\$24.95 pbk | 468 pages

"A wonderfully fascinating social history of rubber's terrors (including slavery and Nazi extermination camps) and pleasures (condoms, among others). Tully is an insightful historian and he narrates this centuries-long account of a commodity as essential to the modern world as oil or steel with great passion and compassion."

—GREG GRANDIN, author, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*; professor of history, New York University

AK PRESS

anarchist publishing
for 21 years ...
and counting



www.akpress.org

Be Our Friend! Join the Friends of AK Press Program!

\$25 a month gets you a copy of every book that we publish as soon as it's printed: that's 20 books a year!

Upcoming books: "Yellow Kid" Weil. Marshall Law.
Property is Theft. Visit our website for details!

Sexual Healing 101

Now & Later (2009)

DIRECTED BY PHILIPPE DIAZ

RELEASED BY CINEMA LIBRE

OPENING AT QUAD CINEMA FEB. 18

Now & Later's claim to distinction lies in its exceptionally, unabashedly explicit sex scenes, which, according to writer/producer/director Philippe Diaz, constitute an activist intervention "to bring sex back in entertainment as a natural part of life as much as politics and philosophy."

The film's slight narrative premise is based on a chance encounter between Bill (James Wortham), a former banker facing a jail sentence for unauthorized transactions he conducted in the trade of Argentinean national debt, and Angela (Shari Solanis), a charitable, footloose and lusty Latin beauty. During the revealing few days he spends hiding out in the comfort zone of her East Los Angeles squatter's loft, she becomes his impromptu lover and life coach. He calls her "Now" for her living in the present moment, and she nicknames him "Later" for his pondering the future.

Their liaison comprises an unlikely reversal of roles: she is an illegal immigrant, but moves around freely, while he has become an outsider in his own country, wanted by the law. Angela productively and generously interacts with the local community through her waitressing job at a neighborhood restaurant and her volunteer work at a clinic, while Bill has swapped one position of dysfunctional confinement for another. She left her childhood behind in Nicaragua when her parents were killed by the Contras, while he plans to escape there after jumping bail.

If all this sounds a tad schematic, the self-conscious teacher-student relationship that unfolds between the leads proves almost insufferably contrived. Bill represents the ignorant American capitalist, whose misguided priorities are drastically reshuffled by the wisdom Angela imparts to him — "if possessions were important, only rich people would be happy," she muses — and the carnal pleasure she nudges him to shamelessly enjoy with her. When she asks him if he masturbates, he disparages it as a childish act, but the film finds respite and redemption in the adolescent limbo its man-child protagonist comes to inhabit.

Now & Later dresses the template of a coming-of-age story down to a pocket-size *Idiot's Guide to Life*. Bill appears baffled and clueless as Angela sums up the U.S. government's history of dirty dealings (Lumumba, Allende, Irangate...), awkward and bashful as she insists he "stop thinking and start feeling" by letting the wind blow over his naked body on the roof of her building and impish as she offers to put on a show for his gratification. Diaz attributes a restorative power to his hero's envelopment in the experience of unencumbered desire, but fails to acknowledge the inherent falsity of Bill's "emancipation," namely that it keeps him living in a bubble, albeit a lower-end one than he is used to.

Rather than Wilhelm Reich's insight that "a sexually repressed society will resort to

violence," which serves as an epigraph to the narrative, the filmmaker should have heeded Georges Bataille's somewhat more nuanced assessment of coitus as the parody of crime. Bill's status as a criminal and the clandestine circumstances of his stay at Angela's are not incidental, but crucial to their intercourse, yet *Now & Later* glosses over this aspect of



Shari Solanis and James Wortham star in Philippe Diaz's *Now & Later*.
PHOTO: Cinema Libre

his awakening in an oddly, disingenuously naïve way. No matter how profoundly liberating the expression of sexuality can be, it does not constitute a natural act that is devoid of ideological investment.

In the cinema's scopophilic realm, ideology translates first and foremost as voyeurism — the displacement of violence onto the passive-aggressive regime of the gaze. Despite Diaz's statement to the contrary, the fact that his "camera always stays at the level of the charac-

ters" fails to neutralize this voyeuristic impetus and privileges the perspective of Bill, who plays the consummate yet passive observer. When Angela asks whether he enjoys looking at himself in the mirrors behind the bed during their first entanglement, or lets him watch her masturbate and shower in the morning, he cuts a humorless and self-absorbed figure. His

sudden presence in the waiting room of the clinic where she volunteers betrays an utter disconnect from other people and matches the film's overall depiction of society as a universe at odds with the pacifying glow of Angela's apartment and rooftop refuge.

Not by coincidence, it takes a sole incursion from the outside world to bring a whiff of dramatic tension to the story, as Diego (Adrian Quinonez), a reporter and sporadic lover of Angela's, stops by for a visit between faraway assignments. Intimations of a ménage-à-trois surface, sexual and gender roles assume a more multi-faceted dimension, and *Now & Later* seems momentarily to take its cue from the luscious minimalism of Chantal Akerman's 1991 *Night and Day*.

Left to their own devices, though, Angela and Bill are never fleshed out beyond Diaz's didactic abstractions. For all their exposure, this puritanical American cipher and idealized nurturing Other make very few sparks fly.

— KENNETH CRAB

ARE YOU READY TO WORK FOR CHANGE?

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE: LABOR STUDIES

- Examine the critical issues facing workers and their organizations in today's economy
- Classes taught by a distinguished faculty of scholars, practitioners and social activists
- Pursue meaningful work in the fields of labor rights, government service, non-profits, and public policy

For more information:
www.sps.cuny.edu/murphy
or call 212.642.2050

CUNY The City University of New York

School of Professional Studies
The Murphy Institute

HopeHistory&Activism Left Forum 2011

300 Panels, 700 Speakers,
Activist Organizing Tracks,
Book Fair, Films and more...

Cornel West

Barbara Ehrenreich

PANELS AND WORKSHOPS INCLUDE:

- The Bloomberg Mystique
- Tactical Workshop with the Yes Men
- Political Cartoons: Resistance Through Ridicule
- The Future of American Liberalism?
- No Fracking Way! Resisting Shale Gas Extraction
- De-growth and Socialism: Is anti-growth anti-capitalist?
- The Betrayal of Haiti
- "Songwriting, Media, and Culture Building"
- Black Liberation Theory: Towards Praxis & Solidarity
- The Unhappy Marriage of Loneliness and Capitalism
- The End of Whiteness: The History of an Idea
- Social movements and Civil activism in China
- Capital's War on Labor, Labor's Civil Wars

Paul Mason

Laura Flanders

Malalai Joya

John Nichols

Carlos M. Vilas

OPENING & CLOSING SPEAKERS

- Tunisia and Egypt: Culture and Resistance
- A History of struggle: Afghan Women
- Financialization and the Jobless Recovery
- Learning From the Tea Party
- Youth of Color Organizing in NYC
- Building Resistance in NYC to the Neoliberal Restructuring of Public Education
- Breaking the Siege on Gaza -- How Solidarity is Overcoming State Terror
- Solidarity Economy: Toward a Pluralist Socialist, Anti-capitalist, Post-capitalist Unity?
- What's It Like To Be A Green, WFP, or Vermont Progressive Party Candidate
- Combating Corporate Control of Health - The Bottom Line or Your Life

PACE UNIVERSITY, 1PACE PLAZA, NYC
FRIDAY MARCH 18TH - SUNDAY MARCH 20TH

For Registration or Information visit: www.leftforum.org 212-817-2002 leftforum@leftforum.org